

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 26, 2019

The Honorable Wilbur L. Ross, Jr.
Secretary of Commerce
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Secretary Ross:

We appreciate your recent invitation to join as official partners for the 2020 Census. We welcome the opportunity to work with the Department of Commerce ("Department") and Census Bureau ("Bureau") to ensure a full and accurate count in this decennial census and to reassure our constituents that the census is fully confidential. However, we feel this invitation, while welcome on its surface, has been sent in bad faith due to the actions of the Department that undermine the ability to have a full and accurate count, as well as the Department's abject disregard for bipartisan congressional subpoenas and the concerns of the very members of Congress you have invited into partnership. Your consistent refusal to engage with congressional inquiries in good faith regarding the census have even forced the House Committee on Oversight and Reform to hold you in contempt of congress.

Our concerns emanate predominantly from the Department's continuing attempt to include a citizenship question in the 2020 Census. It has been made abundantly clear, even by the Bureau's own researchers, that the inclusion of such a question would have a drastically chilling effect on response rates, leading to a possible undercount of more than four million people.¹ Additionally, recently-discovered evidence suggesting that the inclusion of the citizenship question was motivated in part by evidence that it would be politically advantageous to Republicans and non-Hispanic whites calls into question the Department's motives. It is clear to us that the inclusion of a citizenship question has no valid rationale and that the Department is subverting its own stated responsibility in exchange for partisan political gain. These acts severely undermine the credibility of the Bureau, harming its ability to achieve a full and accurate enumeration in the 2020 Census.

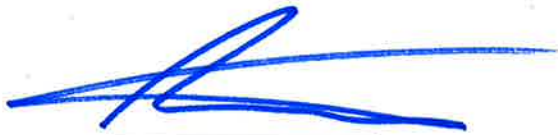
Nonetheless, while we will continue our firm opposition to the inclusion of the citizenship question and inquiry into its origins, we are first and foremost committed to a full and accurate enumeration, as is the Department's stated goal. As such, we are willing to work with the Department to ameliorate the harm the citizenship question has caused and to work with our community partners to achieve a successful census. We will also continue to urge you to obligate the necessary resources to ensure an accurate count is achieved.

¹ 2020 Census: Who's At Risk of Being Miscalculated, the Urban Institute (June 4, 2019), available at <http://apps.urban.org/features/2020-census/>

For the purposes of coordinating with Bureau staff, you may find our staff contacts in the attached addendum.

Finally, we want to reiterate the harm the debate over including the citizenship question has already done to the Bureau's ability to complete a full and accurate enumeration, and we continue to urge that the citizenship question not be included in the 2020 Census. The actions of the Department have damaged trust in the Census, and we are now left to rebuild this trust through intense community engagement. We hope the Department is committed to rectifying this breach of trust. Despite our serious misgivings regarding the Department's intentions for the citizenship question, the importance of a full and accurate count surmounts any reservations and we are committed to pursuing every avenue to achieve an optimal 2020 Census on behalf of our constituents.

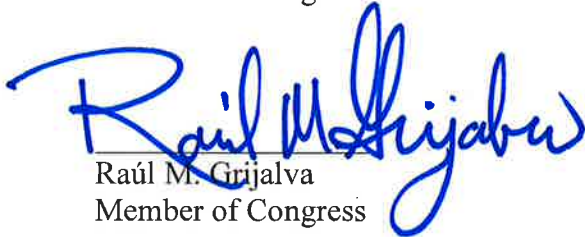
Sincerely,




Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress



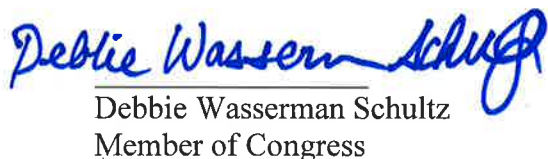
Carolyn B. Maloney
Member of Congress



Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress



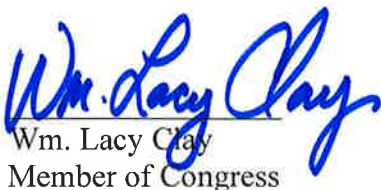
Eliot L. Engel
Member of Congress



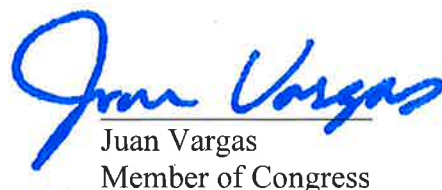
Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress



Wm. Lacy Clay
Member of Congress



Juan Vargas
Member of Congress



Ilhan Omar
Member of Congress



Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress